Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A method for providing a predefined quality of service between two communication partners, wherein the two communication partners are connected by at least two connections, a first connection handled by a first network entity and a second connection handled by a second network entity, and wherein the method [[is]] comprises the steps of:

receiving or defining a service level agreement in a service level specification, distributing the service level specification to the first and the second network entity by means of partitioning or by means of replication; and

controlling the first and the second network entity and thus ensuring that the sum of the provided quality of service on said connections between the two communication partners does not exceed limits defined in the service level specification.

2.   (Previously Presented)   The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of controlling is performed by a control node that is connected to the first and the second network entity.

3.   (Previously Presented)   The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second network entities is connected to and adapted to be controlled by more than one control node and the control node can control more than one network entity.

4.   (Previously Presented)   The method according to claim 1, wherein in case of partitioning the first network entity handles a first kind of service requests and the second network entity handles a second kind of service requests.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein in case of replication each of the first and the second network entities handles up to a certain share of the quality of service permitted by the service level agreement.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a network entity is an edge node.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a control node is a bandwidth broker.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein the bandwidth broker communicates to edge nodes by using multicasting.

9. (Previously Presented) An edge node for providing a connection with a predefined quality of service between two communication partners, comprising:

a control unit for controlling the quality of service of the connection according to instructions received from a bandwidth broker, a storage for storing said instructions, and

an input output unit for providing the connection and receiving said instructions,

wherein the instructions received from the bandwidth broker represent a partitioned or replicated service level specification; and the edge node is enabled to control the quality of service on said connection based on said received partitioned or replicated service level specification for ensuring that the sum of the provided quality of service on said connections between the two communication partners does not exceed limits defined in the service level specification.

10. (Previously Presented) The edge node according to claim 9, wherein the input output unit is further adapted to receive information from further edge nodes providing a further connection between the communication partners and wherein the

control unit is adapted to process the information according to instructions received from a bandwidth broker.

11. (Previously Presented) The edge node according to claim 9, wherein the control unit is adapted to control the quality of service of the connection according to instructions received from a further bandwidth broker and the input output unit is adapted to receive said instructions.

12. (Previously Presented) The edge node according to claim 9, further comprising a charging unit for collecting charging information related to the connection.

13. (Previously Presented) A bandwidth broker of a network, wherein the bandwidth broker is embodied to provide a quality of service on at least two connections between two communication partners according to a service level agreement defined in at least one service specification; and

the bandwidth broker comprising:

a storage for storing the service specification;

an input output unit for distributing the service level specification to a first and a second network entity handling said at least two connections; and

a control unit adapted to control said network entities to ensure that the quality of service provided on the connections does not exceed limits defined in the service specification.

14. (Previously Presented) The bandwidth broker according to claim 13, wherein the control unit is adapted to communicate with a further bandwidth broker and to negotiate the service level agreement with said further bandwidth broker.

15. (Previously Presented) The bandwidth broker according to claim 13, wherein the input output unit is adapted to communicate with said network entities, representing edge nodes by means of multicasting.